

Ex. 18

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Housing Authority of the City of Newark

NEWARK COALITION FOR LOW
INCOME HOUSING, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

CIVIL ACTION No. 89-1303(DRD)

vs.

CERTIFICATION OF
ROBERT GRAHAMHOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF
NEWARK and ANDREW CUOMO, et als.,

Defendants.

I, Robert Graham, hereby certify as follows:

1. I am the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Newark, one of the named defendants in the present litigation. As such, I am fully familiar with the facts set forth herein.
2. This certification is being submitted in support of the Authority's opposition to the plaintiffs' motion for the appointment of a construction receiver.
3. Since my appointment as the Executive Director in 2000, the Authority has continued to make progress in its new construction program.
4. As of the date of the filing of this brief, the Authority has constructed 949 units, with another three hundred currently under construction. Thus, approximately 1,249 units, or approximately 70% of the replacement housing has been built or is under construction. (See Exhibit 16).
5. The Authority recognizes the potential need for additional funds to move several projects forward. To that end, the Authority has, subject to HUD

~~Since the Authority's approximately \$100 million in funding to be used to cover any~~
increases in development costs for the Authority's remaining construction projects.

6. The Authority's Director of Redevelopment, Joseph Bianco, has been charged with requesting new price proposals from First Connecticut Development, Corp. and J.P. Affordable.

7. Assuming the price issues can be resolved over the course of the next few weeks, there is a very strong probability that the aforesaid developers could begin construction as early as late Spring or early Summer.

8. The Authority, as the Court is aware, has decided to perform the Program Management service aspect of its Stella Wright Hope VI grant in-house. We have received approval from Elinor Bacon, the Assistant Secretary of HUD, to allow two new staff employees, Karen Torian and Morris Warner, to provide these services. (Exhibits 17 & 18).

9. Moreover, the letter from Ms. Bacon indicates that she is pleased with progress and the steps that the Authority is taking to move the Stella Wright Hope VI project forward:

The NHA is to be congratulated for the significant progress made on the Stella Wright Hope VI project to date. HUD staff and technical assistance providers are pleased with the increasing capacity of the NHA and with plans being formulated to redevelop Stella Wright Homes and the surrounding Central Ward.

10. With respect to Kreuger Mansion the project is an integral part of the City of Newark's overall plan for the Central Ward. The Mansion will be developed and used as a focal point for cultural, social and support services sponsored by the City and/or the Authority for residents. Many Authority residents live in the Central Ward and would be prime recipients of the opportunities provided by the above cultural center. Any Authority investment in the project will not jeopardize or short-change any of the Authority's vacancy repair and construction programs.

12. The Authority's assistance in bringing this project to fruition is consistent with HUD's policy to create "better" neighborhoods for Authority residents and to give them access to more services.

13. The Authority is also completing its land exchange with the City. This exchange is important in that it will enable the Authority to package a larger,

~~contiguous site for housing development away from several industrial sites. This~~
will lower the overall cost of development and allow the future townhouse residents to live in an environmentally safer, more aesthetically pleasing, community.

14. It has been the Authority's practice to retain construction managers for all of its construction projects. The Authority intends to retain a construction manager or managers for its Stella Wright Hope VI Project to monitor the construction management.

15. Based upon the above, it is respectfully submitted that the construction program is progressing, and is being planned in conjunction with the City's overall development plan. Thus, we believe that the construction program does not require additional court intervention in the form of a receiver or monitor.

I hereby certify that the foregoing statements made by me are true. I further certify that if any of the above statements made by me are willfully false, then I am subject to punishment.


ROBERT GRAHAM

Dated: December 18, 2000